



Sermon Series:

"What The World Needs Now Is Love"

Sermon 1:

"Love Isn't Just A Four Letter Word"
(THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE)

Various Scripture

INTRO: Thank you for being here for the second week of our study on the subject of LOVE. Last week I preached about "That Crazy Little Thing Called Love", and we established, from scripture, THE (Biblical) DEFINITION OF LOVE.

Today, I'm preaching on the subject, "Love Isn't Just A Four Letter Word", and we'll be looking at THE DOCTRINE OF LOVE.

Doctrine is, basically, the teaching principles of any particular belief, especially within the church. So then, the DOCTRINE OF LOVE would comprise the deeper meanings of the subject, going beyond superficial knowledge, to discover Biblical truths that define our belief.

The expression, "The Greeks had a word for it," is true in reference to love. I shared with you last week that the English language has just the one word, LOVE, to express a wide range of emotions that one will experience in his or her lifetime. The Greeks, however, have 6 or 7 words to describe those same emotions. 4 of those are used more than the rest. Let's look at those 4.

1) EROS: The English word Erotic comes from this root. Thus Eros speaks of Erotic Love. The Greeks sang glowing hymns to the sensual and demonic Eros, "the god who is compelled by none but compels all."

Eros is a love of passion. It was considered by the Greeks to be an overmastering passion that seizes and absorbs itself into the mind. The basic idea of this love is self-satisfaction. Eros looks for what it can receive. If it does give, it gives in order to receive. If it fails to get what it wants or expects, bitterness and resentment develops.

Because Eros seeks its own gratification without real consideration for its partner, Eros is considered a conditional love; selfish and unhealthy.

Eros is not used in the New Testament. Nor is it used in the LXX, or Septuagint. (the Greek translation of the Old Testament)

The absence of Eros in Holy Scripture is significant. It is, most likely, explained by the fact that, the word, in Greek culture at least, had become so corrupted in its meaning, that it carried an attitude of unholiness about it. It was associated with the perversion of all sexual misconduct used in temple worship to the false gods of the Greeks.

This being the case, it is not difficult to see why the Holy Spirit never used the word. It simply do not express the true nature of love.

I) EROS:

II) STORGE: (store-gay) Storge is a familial love that's known between family members, but can also be extended to pets. It is considered a natural affection, and even obligation. It is a quiet, abiding feeling within a person that rests on those close to him.

In the New Testament, storgē appears in the noun and verb form with the prefix "a" which therefore negates the love and means without this type of love. It is translated in Romans 1:31 and 2 Timothy 3:3 as "unloving" (or without natural affection, KJV).

In Romans 12:10, storgē is compounded with philos and is translated "devoted" (kindly affectioned, KJV).

III) PHILEO: Phileō is a companionable love. This love speaks of affection and fondness, or liking. It's the tender relationship known between dear friends. It is from Phileō, we get the compound word Philadelphia (city of brotherly love).

Phileō is a love that responds to kindness, or appreciation. It involves giving as well as receiving. And it is the highest word in secular Greek to describe love.

It is used in a number of times in its noun and verb forms in the New Testament.

In John 21:15-17, there seems to be an intentional contrast between Phileo love and Agape love. Before we read it, let me give you the back story.

You will remember that at the mock trial of Christ just prior to His crucifixion, Peter denied Christ 3 times. Jesus had told Peter at dinner, just hours before, that he would deny Him. But Peter vehemently refused what Jesus was saying and responded to Christ, "Even if these others deny you, I never will", "Even if I have to die, I will not disown you". Then just a few hours later, the prediction of Christ came true as Peter denied Jesus 3 times.

Jesus would then be beaten, humiliated, and crucified, as Peter watched it all from the shadows, hidden from sight.

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples on several occasions. Once, a few of the remaining 12 had been out fishing all night and had caught nothing. At morning Jesus calls to them from the shore and ask if they had caught anything, "no" came the reply. He commanded them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat. When they did they caught 153 fish! Peter, only then realizing it was Jesus, jumped in the water and swam to shore. Jesus commanded the men to bring to Him some of the fish they had caught and He baked it over a fire and they ate...

John 21:15-17 "When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love (agapaō) me more than these do?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love (phileō) you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." 16 Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love (agapaō) me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love (phileō) you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." 17 The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love (phileō) me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love (phileō) me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love (phileō) you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

I) EROS:

II) STORGE:

III) PHILEO: CONTINUED Phileō love is beautiful. But it's still conditional, reserved for only a few of our dearest and closest friends and loved ones.

Now let's look at fourth word...

IV) AGAPE: As we spoke about last week, agape love is a Heavenly love. It comes from God. **1 John 4:8** "God is Agape".

Agape is the highest form of love shown and known. It is the noblest word for love in the Greek language, yet there's no trace of it in any ancient heathen writing. However, it is mentioned over 320 times in the New Testament.

Agape is not kindled by the merit or worth of it's object. It originates of it's own God-given nature. It delights in giving. This love keeps on loving even when the loved one is unresponsive, unkind, unlovable, and unworthy. It is unconditional love.

Agape love is the only love that Scripture mandates for us to have for one another.

John 15:12 "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you" Here, we have the command to follow the example of Christ, to love others with His love. And even more profound is the fact that agape love extends to all mankind, not just to those of the Christian faith. We are to love everyone!

Agape love, that is, the love of God, is not found in prejudice, not known in hatred. Its objects may be moral, immoral, tolerable or obnoxious. But Agape love never fails!

Agape is an actionable love! We read in **John 13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you that you also love one another. By this (demonstration of love) all men (believers and unbelievers alike) will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

The Bible teaches that agape can only be known through our actions.

1 John 3:16 "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

How do we know this love? We know agape love by it's actions! (Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to do the same)

CONCLUSION: As you can plainly see, LOVE ISN'T JUST A FOUR LETTER WORD! There's a lot more to love than what most realize or care to know. But for those who dare venture into the unknown, and for those who desire to know the fullness of God in the expression of His love, the sky's the limit!

What is your level of love? Do you love only for what you can get out of it, or do you love unconditionally? Do you love those that are different from you, that don't act, look, talk, or think the way you do? God's command is for us to love everyone! How are you doing with that?